

72 The Dallas Morning News

KENNEDY SLAIN ON DALLAS STREET

JOURNAL'S REPORTER PRESENTS IT



Reporting a heartbreak

12:30 p.m. Friday, November 22, 1963.

"We turned off Main Street and onto Houston for the last leg of the motorcade route to the Trade Mart. . . We saw the president's car make the turn on Elm in front of the Texas School Book Depository Building, gaining a lot of speed. The press car was halfway down the block before the left turn when the first shots rang out. 'What the hell was that?' one of us asked."

Thus begins Bob Rife's account of a tragic moment in American history — the assassination in Dallas of President John F. Kennedy — which would be followed, unbelievably, two days later by the murder of his accused killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, in a shooting that was witnessed by a national television audience.

Rife, now retired, was chief of The Dallas Morning News Washington Bureau at that time. His account of the assassination, and the personal stories of other members of The News staff, are woven together in a gripping narrative by Kate Bittle. The account of the historic days shows sometimes in pursuit of a story that would be, for most of them, the most important they ever covered. Bittle was one of those reporters.

The personal accounts were written 15 years ago, after the assassination and its aftermath, at the behest of Jack Krueger, then managing editor of The News, now retired. Until now, they have been unpublished.

From the accounts, Bittle has woven a story that gives new dimensions to that bigger event, of reporters at work on something that was affecting them as deeply as it would affect the readers.

"Newspapermen may seem callous to some people because of their apparent detachment in covering tragedy," wrote Bille Rife, then assistant managing editor. "This is neither a personal characteristic of persons in the business. No one knew — or won't believe they read this — that I cried up one night at home. I didn't know why, but I sobbed uncontrollably for hours. . ."

My wife has off with my best friend and I miss him." "I don't know whether to kill myself or go bowling." — and other C & W lines from John Anders. Page 3C.

Shall we distinguish between "will" and "shall"? Will you turn to Page 8C?



In Books: Richard Condon's "Death of a Politician," Howard Fast's "Second Generation" and John LeBoutillier's "Harvard Hates America."

Focus

Editorials / Viewpoint / Books

The Dallas Morning News

Sunday November 19 1978

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Being the

KENNEDY SLAIN ON DALLAS STREET

JOHNSON BECOMES PRESIDENT

Reaction
Quits on
Airport



Gen. Connolly
Reflex Well

Pro-Communist
Charged With Act



The Dallas Morning News

LBJ Takes Over Government Reins

Tass Charges Try to Implicate Red Party

Congress Speech Set Wednesday

Says Act
Work of
Bureaucrats



Police Check on Letter and Photo Clues



Arlington Burial for Kennedy

WANDA
TO CLASH



Great Lincoln Memorial Day Begins an Auspicious As Any in Kennedy's Career

The Dallas Morning News and a team with a sense of purpose shared the honors for a personal and historic day. The President's inauguration of John F. Kennedy was a landmark event in the history of the United States.

The report was Kennedy's of personal and professional life, which was a landmark event in the history of the United States.

A growing nation with a sense of purpose and a sense of direction.

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'We worked grimly, swiftly, effectively'

Continued from page 45

out the Saturday paper "to give full coverage to President John Kennedy's visit."

"We were to have three black pages — two pages in addition to our Saturday November paper."

Someone was still pondering protection of the paper when it came to a newspaper a group of New executives and their wives to the Trade Mart to hear the President's speech and to attend the luncheon in his honor.

"I phoned Lewis Pemberton, head of advertising and scheduling, now retired, from the Trade Mart and so the paper at 44 pages with 144 columns of news hole. This was two pages more than we normally would have taken."

What was to follow, however, brought a twist of such changes. The paper's circulation ultimately peaked would be 30 pages with 147 columns of news — 118 of them devoted to Friday's slaughter.

We awoke that day long over the city all morning began to break shortly before 8 a.m. Our breakfast down at Love Field as the President emerged, a sudden shaft of sunlight flamed down on him, the crowd and melted heavily, putting an inches layer of a shimmering crowd back only by a chain-link fence and a line of federal agents and cops.

Banks would write the day's lead story.

"At Love Field an enthusiastic crowd greeted the President. He entered the Secret Service somewhat with an unobscured black-shading near along the Secret Service Kennedy, wearing a bouquet of red roses given her by Mrs. Jackie Kennedy. With the late mayor and congressmen accompanied him, smiling and apparently enjoying it."

"THE MOTORCADE got under way about noon behind the car bearing Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy and Gov. and Mrs. John Connally came the big Secret Service Cadillac known as 'The Green Mary,' then a car bearing Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey, followed by another open car in which Mayor and Mrs. Cullen and U.S. Rep. Roy Roberts rode. Then came the press pool car. "Melvin Hirsch, assistant White House press secretary, rode in the front seat of the pool car with CTR's Martin Smith between him and the Texas Department of Public Safety driver. I was on the left in the rear seat with AP's Jack Hill."

"There were eggs in the press car about what the Vice-President and U.S. Sen. Ralph Yarborough might be talking about. The day before in Los Angeles and Houston, Yarborough had refused to ride in the same car with Mr. Johnson. But during the night, the President's report said he persuaded him to join the Vice-President in the same Democratic party rally."

"On the heart of Dallas, Dallas, Hirsch spoke the repetition of the tremendously difficult reception the President was receiving."

"We turned off Main Street and onto Collins for the last leg of the motorcade route to the Trade Mart at about 12:30 p.m. We saw the President's car make the turn on this in front of the Texas School Book Depository building, gaining a lot of speed. The press car was halfway down the block before the left turn when the first shots rang out. 'What the hell was that?' one of us asked."

"The motorcade kept moving and we did not pause the camera for the approach to the Trade Mart. The motorcade kept moving and we did not pause the camera for the approach to the Trade Mart. The motorcade kept moving and we did not pause the camera for the approach to the Trade Mart."

"We came to a halt. Ahead, we could see considerable movement around the President's car but couldn't make out what it was all about."

"But there was no mistaking by then that the Pres-



ferred eagerly under the most difficult conditions the ever convulsed a major newspaper."

"Many elements complicated the coverage against the fact that the emotional impact of the assassination was almost overwhelming. I shall never forget the arguments that swept the city room when the official word came that the President was dead. There were survivors of the moment just a fusion look of fury at every face. They took to work as slowly as possible, getting pretty effectively."

"One of our society staff writers, Mary Elizabeth Woodward (now a New York housewife), an erstwhile editor of the President was in a normal state of complete utter bewilderment."

"She had been in the first and second couple of seats in the motorcade. She had been in the first and second couple of seats in the motorcade. She had been in the first and second couple of seats in the motorcade."

himself. Oswald off and he's not even getting paid for it. Putting it followed."

"The other side of the fence revealed an gunman. There was just a mass of confused faces and three dead men. 'What happened?' I asked one. 'What happened?' he asked me."

"People were still climbing over the fence. I ran east toward the Trade Mart Book Depository."

"A policeman was talking to a black boy. I was a colored man. I was a colored man. I was a colored man."

"The boy was talking to the other side of the fence. The crowd seemed to have grown back from the killing."

man and address came from company records. The superintendent would recall that he and a policeman and Oswald as they charged into the building after the shots were fired."

"Neither police in the building nor the superintendent knew that Oswald was already under arrest."

"I felt that I had my end of the story period. When the crisis had been finished by the policeman at the front door allowed the significant press crowd to pass. I headed for the paper."

"That name — Lee Oswald — it was familiar. Lee Harvey Oswald. It was familiar."

"Back in 1958 while working at the (old) Fort Worth Press I'd written several stories about Oswald, the assassin and his brother Jack. I had interviewed his mother and his brother Jack. In fact, we had heard Oswald's voice."

"Two words."

"Before the day ended I was reviewing the old clips. 'Lee Harvey Oswald, Port Worth's assassin, being up on his mother when the Press reached him by telephone at the Metropolitan Hotel in Moscow.'"

"We arranged a conference call. Margaret Oswald, his mother, was on another phone. The 30-year-old woman spoke two hours before a 100th anniversary telephone that claimed down the road. She had another son, pleading, 'Hello! Hello! Lee!' When, however, and New York operators agreed on what had happened, a statement, 50-year-old mother was silent."

"When I got to The News, the city room was crowded. There was a great deal of excitement, of course, but I was struck by the lack of confusion."

"I looked at the clock and began trying to read the 126 pages of notes I had furiously scribbled during the bloody afternoon."

"THIS WAS JUST ANOTHER STORY, I tried to tell myself. This was just another deadline ticking away."

"I didn't know any more."

"When I looked up their job to the typewriter, it was with a sense of writing history."

"Others shared my feelings for the day. Ironically, the reporter declined to make investigative work on the case that day of we wasn't assigned to cover the Kennedy visit."

"He's Hugh Apanovich, now a correspondent for ABC-TV."

"Hugh quietly pulled what he looked at the assignment sheet that morning and found himself assigned. He'd been working the week before news of Kennedy's assassination and powers that were putting the city."

"Somebody pulled up to us in the city desk while they were to visit at the Trade Mart. 'The hell with it. No hitting on the back, answering the phone for me.'"

"I decided to have a cup of coffee in the cafeteria and get on out of the building before somebody told me to get out. I sat in the cafeteria with James Flood, an advertising man, and Bob Gooding, a WFAA-TV newsman. This was about 11 a.m."

"A fellow wearing his arms and talking loudly as he down two red-colored breakfast and returned to the table. I asked who the man was and he told me Gooding. 'There's Jack Ruby. I guess he's up here to get his share in the Texas School Book Depository.'"

"I kept writing away about the events that were to follow."

"It would be a day to remember for Apanovich, his mother, his brother and his brother. The parade, his brother and his brother. The parade, his brother and his brother. The parade, his brother and his brother."

